

R309-700. Financial Assistance: State Drinking Water Project Revolving Loan Program.

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R309-700. Financial Assistance: State Drinking Water Project Revolving Loan Program.

R309-700-1. Purpose.

This rule establishes criteria for financial assistance to public drinking water systems in accordance with Title 73, Chapter 10c, Utah Code Annotated using funds made available by the Utah legislature from time to time for this purpose.

R309-700-2. Statutory Authority.

The authority for the Department of Environmental Quality acting through the Drinking Water Board to issue loans to political subdivisions to finance all or part of drinking water project costs and to enter into "credit enhancement agreements", "interest buy-down agreements", and "Hardship Grants" is provided in Chapter 10c, Title 73, Utah Code.

R309-700-3. Definitions and Eligibility.

Title 73, Chapter 10c, subsection 4(2)(a) limits eligibility for financial assistance under this section to political subdivisions.

Definitions for terms used in this rule are given in R309-110. Definitions for terms specific to this rule are given below.

"Board" means the Drinking water Board.

"Drinking Water Project" means any work or facility necessary or desirable to provide water for human consumption and other domestic uses. Its scope includes collection, treatment, storage, and distribution facilities.

"Project Costs" include the cost of acquiring and constructing any project including, without limitation: the cost of acquisition and construction of any facility or any modification, improvement, or extension of such facility; any cost incident to the acquisition of any necessary project, easement or right of way, engineering or architectural fees, legal fees, fiscal agents' and financial advisors' fees; any cost incurred for any preliminary planning to determine the economic and engineering feasibility of a proposed project; costs of economic investigations and studies, surveys, preparation of designs, plans, working drawings, specifications and the inspection and supervision of the construction of any facility; interest accruing on loans made under this program during acquisition and construction of the project; and any other cost incurred by the Board or the Department of Environmental Quality, in connection with the issuance of obligation to evidence any loan made to it under the law.

"Drinking Water Project Obligation" means any bond, note or other obligation issued to finance all or part of the cost of acquiring, constructing, expanding, upgrading or improving a drinking water project, including, but not limited to, preliminary planning, studies, surveys, engineering or architectural fees, and preparation of plans and specifications.

"Credit Enhancement Agreement" means any agreement entered into between the Board, on behalf of the State, and an eligible water system for the purpose of providing methods and assistance to eligible water systems to improve the security for and marketability of drinking water project obligations.

"Eligible Water System" means any community drinking water system owned by a political subdivision of the State.

"Interest Buy-Down Agreement" means any agreement entered into between the Board, on behalf of the State, and an eligible water system, for the purpose of reducing the cost of financing incurred by an eligible water system on bonds issued by the subdivision for project costs.

"Financial Assistance" means a project loan, credit enhancement agreement, interest buy-down agreement, or technical assistance.

"Interest" means an assessment applied to loan recipients. The assessment shall be calculated as a percentage of principal.

"Emergency" means an unexpected, serious occurrence or situation requiring urgent or immediate action resulting from the failure of equipment or other infrastructure, or contamination of the water supply, threatening the health and / or safety of the public / water users.

R309-700-4. Application and Project Initiation Procedures.

The following procedures must normally be followed to obtain financial assistance from the Board:

- (1) It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain the necessary financial, legal and engineering counsel to prepare its application and an effective and appropriate financial assistance agreement.
- (2) A completed application form, engineering report listing the project alternatives considered and including a justification for the chosen alternative, a project financing plan including an evaluation of credit enhancement, interest buy-down and loan methods applicable to the project, and financial capability assessment are submitted to the Board. Comments from the local health department and/or district engineer may accompany the

application. Comments from other interested parties such as an association of governments will also be accepted. Those costs incurred subsequent to the submission of a completed funding application form to the Board and prior to the execution of a financial assistance agreement and which meet the criteria for project costs are eligible for reimbursement from the proceeds of the financial assistance agreement.

(3) An engineering and financial feasibility report is prepared by Division staff for the Board's consideration.

(4) The Board may authorize financial assistance for the project on the basis of the staff's feasibility report and designate whether a loan, credit enhancement agreement, interest buy-down agreement, hardship grant or any combination thereof, is to be entered into, and approve the project schedule (see R309-700-13). The Board shall authorize a hardship grant only if it determines that other financing alternatives are unavailable or unreasonably expensive to the applicant (see R309-700-5). If the applicant seeks financial assistance in the form of a loan of amounts in the security account established pursuant to Chapter 10c, Title 73 "Utah Code", which loan is intended to provide direct financing of projects costs, then the Board shall authorize such loan only if it determines that credit enhancement agreements, interest buy-down agreements and other financing alternatives are unavailable or unreasonably expensive to the applicant or that a loan represents the financing alternative most economically advantageous to the state and the applicant; provided, that for purposes of this paragraph and for purposes of Section 73-10c-4(2), Utah Code, the term "loan" shall not include loans issued in connection with interest buy-down agreements as described in R309-700-11(2) or in connection with any other interest buy-down arrangement.

(5) Planning Grant - The applicant must submit an application provided by the Division and attach a scope of work, project schedule, cost estimates, and a draft contract for planning services.

(6) Planning Loan - The applicant requesting a Planning Loan must complete an application for a Planning Loan, prepare a plan of study, satisfactorily demonstrate procurement of planning services, and prepare a draft contract for planning services including financial evaluations and a schedule of work.

(7) Design Grant or Loan - The applicant requesting a Design Grant or Loan must have completed an engineering plan meeting program requirements.

(8) The project applicant must demonstrate public support for the project. As a minimum, for a loan to be secured by a revenue bond, the Sponsor must mail notices to each water user in the Sponsor's service area informing them of a public hearing. In addition to the time and location of the public hearing the notice shall inform water users of the Sponsor's intent to issue a non-voted revenue bond to the Board, shall describe the face amount of the bond, the rate of interest, the repayment schedule and shall describe the impact of the project on the user including: user rates, impact and connection fees. The notice shall state that water users may respond to the Sponsor in writing or in the

public hearing within ten days after the date of the notice. A copy of all written responses and a certified record of a public hearing shall be forwarded to the Division of Drinking Water.

(9) For financial assistance mechanisms when the applicant's bond is purchased by the Board, the project applicant's bond documentation, including an opinion from legal counsel experienced in bond matters that the drinking water project obligation is a valid and binding obligation of the applicant (see R309-700-14(3)), must be submitted to the Assistant Attorney General for preliminary approval and the applicant shall publish a Notice of Intent to issue bonds in a newspaper of general circulation pursuant to the Utah Code, Section 11-14-21. For financial assistance mechanisms when the applicant's bond is not purchased by the Board, the applicant shall submit a true and correct copy of an opinion from legal counsel experienced in bond matters that the drinking water project obligation is a valid and binding obligation of the applicant.

(10) Hardship Grant - The Board or its designee executes a grant agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of the grant.

(11) The Board, through its Executive Secretary, shall issue a Plan Approval for plans and specifications.

(12) If a project is designated to be financed by the Board through a loan or an interest buy-down agreement as described in R309-700-11(2) to cover any part of project costs an account supervised by the applicant and the Board will be established by the applicant to assure that loan funds are used only for qualified project costs. If financial assistance for the project is provided by the Board in the form of a credit enhancement or interest buy-down agreement as described in R309-700-11(1) all project funds will be maintained in a separate account and a quarterly report of project expenditures will be provided to the Board.

(13) If a revenue bond is to be used to secure a loan, a User Charge Ordinance must be submitted to the Board for review and approval to insure adequate provisions for debt retirement and/or operation and maintenance. If a general obligation bond is to be used to secure a loan, a User Charge Ordinance must be submitted to the Board for review and approval to insure the system will have adequate resources to provide acceptable service.

(14) A plan of operation for the completed project, including staffing with an appropriately certified (in accordance with R309-300) operator, staff training, and procedures to assure efficient start-up, operation and maintenance of the project, must be submitted by the applicant and approved by the Board, its Executive Secretary or other designee.

(15) The applicant's contract with its engineer must be submitted to the Board for review to determine that there will be adequate engineering involvement, including project supervision and inspection, to successfully complete the project.

(16) The applicant's attorney must provide an opinion to the Board regarding legal incorporation of the applicant, valid legal title to rights-of-way and the project site, and adequacy of bidding and contract documents.

(17) CREDIT ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT AND INTEREST BUY-DOWN AGREEMENT ONLY - The Board executes the credit enhancement agreement or interest buy-down agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of the security or other forms of assistance provided by the agreement and notifies the applicant to sell the bonds (See R309-700-10 and -11).

(18) CREDIT ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT AND INTEREST BUY-DOWN AGREEMENT ONLY - The applicant sells the bonds and notifies the Board of the terms of sale. If a credit enhancement agreement is utilized, the bonds shall contain the legend required by Section 73-10c-6(3)(d), Utah Code. If an interest buy-down agreement is utilized, the bonds shall bear a legend which makes reference to the interest buy-down agreement and states that such agreement does not constitute a pledge of or charge against the general revenues, credit or taxing powers of the state and that the holder of any such bond may look only to the applicant and the funds and revenues pledged by the applicant for the payment of interest and principal on the bonds.

(19) The applicant opens bids for the project.

(20) LOAN ONLY - The Board approves purchase of the bonds and executes the loan contract (see R309-700-4(24)).

(21) LOAN ONLY - The loan closing is conducted.

(22) A preconstruction conference shall be held.

(23) The applicant issues a written notice to proceed to the contractor.

(24) The applicant must have adopted a Water Management and Conservation Plan prior to executing the loan agreement.

R309-700-5. Loan, Credit Enhancement, Interest Buy-Down, and Hardship Grant Consideration Policy.

(1) Board Priority Determination. In determining the priority for financial assistance the Board shall consider:

- (a) The ability of the applicant to obtain funds for the drinking water project from other sources or to finance such project from its own resources;
- (b) The ability of the applicant to repay the loan or other project obligations;

- (c) Whether a good faith effort to secure all or part of the services needed from the private sector through privatization has been made; and
- (d) Whether the drinking water project:
- (i) meets a critical local or state need;
 - (ii) is cost effective;
 - (iii) will protect against present or potential hazards;
 - (iv) is needed to comply with the minimum standards of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 USC, 300f, et. seq. or similar or successor statute;
 - (v) is needed to comply with the minimum standards of the Utah Safe Drinking Water Act, Title 19, Chapter 4 or similar or successor statute.
 - (vi) is needed as a result of an Emergency.
- (e) The overall financial impact of the proposed project on the citizens of the community, including direct and overlapping indebtedness, tax levies, user charges, impact or connection fees, special assessments, etc., resulting from the proposed project, and anticipated operation and maintenance costs versus the median income of the community;
- (f) Consistency with other funding source commitments which may have been obtained for the project;
- (g) The point total from an evaluation of the criteria listed in Table 1;

TABLE 1 NEED FOR PROJECT		
1. PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE (SELECT ONE)		POINTS
	A. There is evidence that waterborne illnesses have occurred	15
	B. There are reports of illnesses which may be waterborne	10
	C. No reports of waterborne illness, but high potential for such exists	5
	D. No reports of possible waterborne illness and low potential for such exists	0
2. WATER QUALITY RECORD (SELECT ONE)		
	A. Primary Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) violation more than 6 times in preceding 12 months	15
	B. In the past 12 months violated a primary MCL 4 to 6 times	12

	C. In the past 12 months violated a primary MCL 2 to 3 times or exceeded the Secondary Drinking Water Standards by double	9
	D. In the past 12 months violated MCL 1 time	6
	E. Violation of the Secondary Drinking Water Standards	5
	F. Does not meet all applicable MCL goals	3
	G. Meets all MCLs and MCL goals	0
3. VERIFICATION OF POTENTIAL SHORTCOMINGS (SELECT ONE)		
	A. Has had sanitary survey within the last year	5
	B. Has had sanitary survey within the last five years	3
	C. Has not had sanitary survey within last five years	0
4. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF EXISTING FACILITIES (SELECT ALL THOSE WHICH ARE TRUE AND PROJECT WILL REMEDY)		
	A. The necessary water treatment facilities do not exist, not functioning, functioning but do not meet the requirements of the Utah Public Drinking Water Rules (UPDWR)	10
	B. Sources are not developed or protected according to UPDWR	10
	C. Source capacity is not adequate to meet current demands and system occasionally goes dry or suffers from low pressures	10
	D. Significant areas within distribution system have inadequate fire protection	8
	E. Existing storage tanks leak excessively or are structurally flawed	5
	F. Pipe leak repair rate is greater than 4 leaks per 100 connections per year	2
	G. Existing facilities are generally sound and meeting existing needs	0
5. ABILITY TO MEET FUTURE DEMANDS (Select One)		
	A. Facilities have inadequate capacity and cannot reliably meet current demands	10
	B. Facilities will become inadequate within the next three years	5
	C. Facilities will become inadequate within the next five to ten years	3
6. OVERALL URGENCY (Select One)		
	A. System is generally out of water. There is no fire protection or water for flushing toilets	10
	B. System delivers water which cannot be rendered safe by boiling	10

	C. System delivers water which can be rendered safe by boiling	8
	D. System is occasionally out of water	5
	E. Situation should be corrected, but is not urgent	0
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR NEED FOR PROJECT		100

(h) Other criteria that the Board may deem appropriate.

(2) Drinking Water Board Financial Assistance Determination. The amount and type of financial assistance offered will be based on the following considerations:

(a) An evaluation based upon the criteria in Tables 2 and 3 of the applicant's financial condition, the project's impact on the community, and the applicant's commitment to operating a responsible water system.

The interest rate to be charged by the Board for its financial assistance will be computed using the number of points assigned to the project from Table 2 to reduce, in a manner determined by Board resolution from time to time, the most recent Revenue Bond Buyer Index (RBBI) as published by the Bond Buyer's Guide. The interest rate so calculated will be assigned to the financial assistance. To encourage rapid repayment of a loan the Board will increase the interest rate 0.02 per cent (0.02%) for each year the repayment period exceeds five (5.0) years.

For hardship grant consideration, exclusive of planning and design grants or loans described in Sections R309-700-6, 7 and 8, the estimated annual cost of drinking water service for the average residential user should exceed 1.75% of the median adjusted gross household income from the most recent available State Tax Commission records. If, in the judgment of the Board, the State Tax Commission data is insufficient the Board may accept other measurements of the water users' income (i.e. local income survey or questionnaire when there is a significant difference between the number of service connections for a system and the number of tax filings for a given zip code or city). The Board will also consider the applicant's level of contribution to the project.

TABLE 2 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS		
1. COST EFFECTIVENESS RATIO (SELECT ONE)		POINTS
	A. Project cost \$0 to \$500 per benefitting connection	13
	B. \$501 to \$1,500	11
	C. \$1,501 to \$2,000	9
	D. \$2,001 to \$3,000	6
	E. \$3,001 to \$5,000	3
	F. \$5,001 to \$10,000	1
	G. Over \$10,000	0

2. PRIVATE SECTOR OR OTHER FUNDING, BUT NOT OWN CONTRIBUTION (SELECT ONE)		
	A. A reasonable search for it has been made without success	10
	B. Will provide greater than 50% of project cost	10
	C. Will provide 25 to 49% of project cost	8
	D. Will provide 10 to 24% of project cost	5
	E. Will provide 1 to 9% of project cost	3
	F. Has not been investigated	0
3. CURRENT LOCAL MEDIAN ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME (AGI) (SELECT ONE)		
	A. Less than 70% of State Median AGI	15
	B. 71 to 90% of State Median AGI	12
	C. 91 to 115% of State Median AGI	9
	D. 116 to 135% of State Median AGI	6
	E. 136 to 160% of State Median AGI	3
	F. Greater than 161% of State Median AGI	0
4. APPLICANT'S COMMITMENT TO PROJECT FUNDING CONTRIBUTED BY APPLICANT (SELECT ONE)		
	A. Greater than 25% of project funds	15
	B. 10 to 25% of project funds	12
	C. 5 to 9% of project funds	9
	D. 2 to 4% of project funds	6
	E. Less than 2% of project funds	0
5. ABILITY TO REPAY LOAN		
5A. WATER BILL (INCLUDING TAXES) AFTER PROJECT IS BUILT RELATIVE TO LOCAL MEDIAN ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME (SELECT ONE)		
	A. Greater than 2.50% of local median AG	15
	B. 2.01 to 2.50% of local median AGI	11
	C. 1.51 to 2.00% of local median AGI	7
	D. 1.01 to 1.50% of local median AGI	3
	E. 0 to 1.00% of local median AGI	0
5B. TOTAL DEBT LOAD (PRINCIPAL ONLY) OF APPLICANT AFTER PROJECT IS CONSTRUCTED (INCLUDING WATER AND SEWER DEBT, LIGHTING DEBT, SCHOOL DEBT, ETC.) (SELECT ONE)		
	A. Greater than 12% of fair market value	15
	B. 8.1 to 12% of fair market value	12
	C. 4.1 to 8.0% of fair market value	9
	D. 2.1 to 4.0% of fair market value	6
	E. 1.0 to 2.0% of fair market value	3
	F. Less than 1% of fair market value	0
6. SPECIAL INCENTIVES Applicant:		
	A. is using a master plan which includes water	4

	management & conservation	
	B. Has a replacement fund receiving annual deposits of 5% of drinking water budget	4
	C. is creating or enhancing a regionalization plan	4
	D. Has a rate structure encouraging conservation	4
	E. Has received a Quality Community designation	4
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR FINANCIAL NEED		100

- (b) Optimizing return on the security account while still allowing the project to proceed.
- (c) Local political and economic conditions.
- (d) Cost effectiveness evaluation of financing alternatives.
- (e) Availability of funds in the security account.
- (f) Environmental need.
- (g) Other criteria the Board may deem appropriate.

R309-700-6. Planning Grant.

(1) A Planning Grant can only be made to a political subdivision with a population less than 10,000 people demonstrating an urgent need to evaluate its drinking water system's technical, financial and managerial capacity, and lacks the financial means to readily accomplish such an evaluation. A Planning Grant will be limited to \$10,000 or the estimated cost of the planning effort, whichever is less unless otherwise approved by the Board.

(2) The applicant must demonstrate that all funds necessary to complete project planning will be available prior to commencing the planning effort. The Planning Grant will be deposited with these other funds into a supervised escrow account at the time the grant agreement between the applicant and the Board is executed.

(3) Failure on the part of the recipient of a Planning Grant to implement the findings of the plan may prejudice any future applications for drinking water project funding.

(4) The recipient of a Planning Grant must first receive written approval for any cost increases or changes to the scope of work.

- (5) The Planning Grant recipient must provide a copy of the planning project results to the Division. The planning effort shall conform to rules R309.

R309-700-7. Planning Loan.

- (1) A Planning Loan can only be made to a political subdivision which demonstrates a financial hardship preventing the completion of project planning.
- (2) A Planning Loan is made to a political subdivision with the intent to provide interim financial assistance for project planning until the long-term project financing can be secured. The Planning Loan must be repaid to the Board unless the payment obligation is waived by the Board.
- (3) The applicant must demonstrate that all funds necessary to complete project planning will be available prior to commencing the planning effort. The Planning Loan will be deposited with these other funds into a supervised escrow account at the time the loan agreement between the applicant and the Board is executed.
- (4) The recipient of a Planning Loan must first receive written approval for any cost increases or changes to the scope of work.
- (5) A copy of the document(s) prepared by means of the planning loan shall be submitted to the Division.

R309-700-8. Design Grant or Loan.

- (1) A Design Grant or Loan can only be made to a political subdivision demonstrating financial hardship preventing completion of project design. For purposes of this Section R309-700-8, project design means engineering plans and specifications, construction contracts, and associated work.
- (2) A Design Grant or Loan is made to a political subdivision with the intent to provide interim financial assistance for the completion of the project design until the long-term project financing can be secured. The Design Grant or Loan must be repaid to the Board unless the payment obligation is waived by the Board as authorized by 73-10c-4(3)(b).
- (3) The applicant must demonstrate that all funds necessary to complete the project design will be available prior to commencing the design effort. The Design Grant or Loan will be deposited with these other funds into a supervised escrow account at the time the grant or loan agreement between the applicant and the Board is executed.
- (4) The recipient of a Design Grant or Loan must first receive written approval from the Board before incurring any cost increases or changes to the scope of work.

R309-700-9. Credit Enhancement Agreements.

The Board will determine whether a project may receive all or part of a loan, credit enhancement agreement or interest buy-down agreement subject to the criteria in R309-700-5. To provide security for project obligations the Board may agree to purchase project obligations of applicants or make loans to the applicants to prevent defaults in payments on project obligations. The Board may also consider making loans to the applicants to pay the cost of obtaining letters of credit from various financial institutions, municipal bond insurance, or other forms of insurance or security for project obligations. In addition, the Board may consider other methods and assistance to applicants to properly enhance the marketability of or security for project obligations.

R309-700-10. Interest Buy-Down Agreements.

Interest buy-down agreements may consist of:

- (1) A financing agreement between the Board and applicant whereby a specified sum is loaned or granted to the applicant to be placed in a trust account. The trust account shall be used exclusively to reduce the cost of financing for the project.
- (2) A financing agreement between the Board and the applicant whereby the proceeds of bonds purchased by the Board is combined with proceeds from publicly issued bonds to finance the project. The rate of interest on bonds purchased by the Board may carry an interest rate lower than the interest rate on the publicly issued bonds, which when blended together will provide a reduced annual debt service for the project.
- (3) Any other legal method of financing which reduces the annual payment amount on locally issued bonds. After credit enhancement agreements have been evaluated by the Board and it is determined that this method is not feasible or additional assistance is required, interest buy-down agreements and loans may be considered. Once the level of financial assistance required to make the project financially feasible is determined, a cost effective evaluation of interest buy-down options and loans must be completed. The financing alternative chosen should be the one most economically advantageous for the state and the applicant.

R309-700-11. Loans.

The Board may make loans to finance all or part of a drinking water project only after credit enhancement agreements and interest buy-down agreements have been evaluated and found either unavailable or unreasonably expensive. The financing alternative chosen should be the one most economically advantageous for the state and its political subdivisions.

R309-700-12. Project Authorization (Reference R309-700-4(4)).

A project may be "Authorized" for a loan, credit enhancement agreement, interest buy-down agreement, or hardship grant in writing by the Board following submission and favorable review of an application form, engineering report (if required), financial capability assessment and staff feasibility report. The engineering report shall include a cost effectiveness analysis of feasible project alternatives capable of meeting State and Federal drinking water requirements. It shall include consideration of monetary costs including the present worth or equivalent annual value of all capital costs, operation, maintenance, and replacement costs. The alternative selected must be the most economical means of meeting applicable State and Federal drinking water requirements over the useful life of the facility while recognizing environmental and other nonmonetary considerations. If it is anticipated that a project will be a candidate for financial assistance from the Board, the Staff should be contacted, and the plan of study for the engineering report (if required) should be approved before the planning is initiated.

Once the application form, plan of study, engineering report, and financial capability assessment are reviewed, the staff will prepare a project feasibility report for the Board's consideration in Authorizing a project. The project feasibility report will include a detailed evaluation of the project with regard to the Board's funding priority criteria, and will contain recommendations for the type of financial assistance which may be extended (i.e., for a loan, credit enhancement agreement, interest buy-down agreement, or hardship grant).

Project Authorization is not a contractual commitment and is conditioned upon the availability of funds at the time of loan closing or signing of the credit enhancement, interest buy-down, or grant agreement and upon adherence to the project schedule approved at that time. If the project is not proceeding according to the project schedule the Board may withdraw the project Authorization so that projects which are ready to proceed can obtain necessary funding. Extensions to the project schedule may be considered by the Board, but any extension requested must be fully justified.

R309-700-13. Financial Evaluations.

(1) The Board considers it a proper function to assist and give direction to project applicants in obtaining funding from such State, Federal or private financing sources as may be available to achieve the most effective utilization of resources in meeting the needs of the State. This may also include joint financing arrangements with several funding agencies to complete a total project.

(2) Hardship Grants will be evidenced by a grant agreement.

(3) In providing any form of financial assistance in the form of a loan, the Board may purchase bonds of the applicant only if the bonds are accompanied by a legal opinion of recognized municipal bond counsel to the effect that the bonds are legal and binding under applicable Utah law (including, if applicable, the Utah Municipal Bond Act). For bonds of \$150,000 or less the Board will not require this opinion.

(a) In providing any form of financial assistance in the form of a loan, the Board may purchase either a taxable or non-taxable bonds; provided that it shall be the general preference of the Board to purchase bonds issued by the applicant only if the bonds are tax exempt and are accompanied by a legal opinion of recognized municipal bond counsel to the effect that interest on the bonds is exempt from federal income taxation. Such an opinion must be obtained by the applicant in the following situations:

(i) Bonds which are issued to finance a project which will also be financed in part at any time by the proceeds of other bonds which are exempt from federal income taxation.

(ii) Bonds which are not subject to the arbitrage rebate provisions of Section 148 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or successor provision of similar intent), including, without limitation, bonds covered by the "small governmental units" exemption contained in Section 148(f)(4)(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or any successor provision of similar intent) and bonds which are not subject to arbitrage rebate because the gross proceeds from the loan will be completely expended within six months after the issuance of such bonds.

(b) In any other situations, the Board may purchase taxable bonds if it determines, after evaluating all relevant circumstances including the applicant's ability to pay, that the purchase of the taxable bonds is in the best interests of the State and applicant.

(c) If more than 25 percent of the project is to serve industry, bond counsel must evaluate the loan to ensure the tax exempt status of the loan fund.

(d) Revenue bonds purchased by the Board shall be secured by a pledge of water system revenues, and it is the general policy of the Board that the pledge of water revenues for the payment of debt service (principal and/or interest) on a particular revenue bond be on a parity with the pledge of those water revenues as security for the debt service payments on all other bonds or other forms of indebtedness which are secured by the water revenues.

(4) The Board will consider the financial feasibility and cost effectiveness evaluation of the project in detail. The financial capability assessment must be completed as a basis for the review. The Board will generally use these reports to determine whether a project will be Authorized to receive a loan, credit enhancement agreement, interest buy-down agreement, or hardship grant (Reference R309-700-9, -10 and -11). If a project is Authorized to receive a loan, the Board will establish the portion of the construction cost to be included in the loan and will set the terms for the loan. The Board will require the applicants to repay the loan as rapidly as is reasonably consistent with the financial

capability of the applicant. It is the Board's intent to avoid repayment schedules which would exceed the design life of the project facilities.

(5) Normal engineering and investigation costs incurred by the Department of Environmental Quality or Board during preliminary project investigation and prior to Board Authorization will not become a charge to the applicant if the project is found infeasible, denied by the Board, or if the applicant withdraws the Application prior to the Board's Authorization. If the credit enhancement agreement or interest buy-down agreement does not involve a loan of funds from the Board, then administrative costs will not be charged to the project. However, if the project is Authorized to receive a loan or grant of funds from the Board, all costs from the beginning of the project will be charged to the project and paid by the applicant as a part of the total project cost. If the applicant decides not to build the project after the Board has Authorized the project, all costs accruing after the Authorization will be reimbursed by the applicant to the Board.

(6) The Board shall determine the date on which the scheduled payments of principal and interest will be made. In fixing this date, all possible contingencies shall be considered, and the Board may allow the system one year of actual use of the project facilities before the first repayment of principal is required.

(7) The applicant shall furnish the Board with acceptable evidence that the applicant is capable of paying its share of the construction costs during the construction period.

(8) LOANS AND INTEREST BUY-DOWN AGREEMENTS ONLY - The Board may require, as part of the loan or interest buy-down agreement, that any local funds which are to be used in financing the project be committed to construction prior to or concurrent with the committal of State funds.

(9) The Board will not forgive the applicant of any payment after the payment is due.

(10) The Board will require a debt service reserve account be established by the applicant at or before the loan is closed. Deposits to that account shall be made at least annually in the amount of one-tenth of the annual payment on the bond(s) purchased by the Board and shall continue until the total amount in the debt service reserve fund is equal to the annual payment. The debt service reserve account shall be continued until the bond is retired. Annual reports/statements will be required. Failure to maintain the reserve account will constitute a technical default on the bond(s) and may result in penalties being assessed. Annual reports/statements will be required.

(11) The Board will require a capital facilities replacement reserve account be established at or before the loan is closed. Deposits to that account shall be made at least annually in the amount of five percent (5%) of the applicant's annual drinking water system budget, including depreciation, unless otherwise specified by the Board at the time of loan authorization, until the loan is repaid. This fund shall not serve as security for the payment of principal or interest on the loan. The applicant shall adopt such resolutions as necessary to limit the use of the fund to construct capital facilities for its

water system and to notify the Board prior to making any disbursements from the fund so the Board can confirm that any expenditure is for an acceptable purpose. The applicant will not need the consent of the Board prior to making any expenditure from the fund. Failure to maintain the reserve account will constitute a technical default on the bond(s) and may result in penalties being assessed. Annual reports/statements will be required.

(12) If the Board is to purchase a revenue bond, the Board will require that the applicant's water rates be established such that sufficient net revenue will be raised to provide at least 125% or such other amount as the Board may determine of the total annual debt service.

R309-700-14. Committal of Funds and Approval of Agreements.

After the Board has issued a Plan Approval and received the appropriate legal documents and other items required by Rule R309-700, the Board will determine whether the project loan, interest buy-down, credit enhancement, and/or grant meets the conditions of its authorization. If so, the Board will give its final approval. The Executive Secretary or designee may then execute the financial assistance agreement if no aspects of the project have changed significantly since the Board's authorization of the loan or credit enhancement, provided all conditions imposed by the Board have been met. If significant changes have occurred the Board will then review the project and, if satisfied, the Board will then commit funds, approve the signing of the contract, credit enhancement agreement, interest buy-down agreement, or grant agreement, and instruct the Executive Secretary to submit a copy of the signed contract or agreement to the Division of Finance.

R309-700-15. Construction.

The Division of Drinking Water staff may conduct inspections and will report to the applicant and applicant's engineer. Contract change orders must be properly negotiated with the contractor and approved in writing. Change orders in excess of \$10,000 must receive prior written approval by the Executive Secretary before execution. The applicant shall notify the Executive Secretary when the project is near completion and request a final inspection. When the project is complete to the satisfaction of the applicant, the applicant's engineer, and the Executive Secretary, written approval will be issued by the Executive Secretary in accordance with R309-500-9 to commence using the project facilities.

KEY: loans, interest buy-downs, credit enhancements, hardship grants

Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment: August 6, 2004

Notice of Continuation: April 2, 2007

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: 19-4-104; 73-10c